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ABSTRACT

In order to improve the treatment of minorities in United States history textbooks, the National Education Association has developed guidelines for evaluating multiethnic materials. According to the guidelines, textbooks should portray cultural pluralism as a value to respect; present sexual, racial, religious, and ethnic groups in such a way as to build mutual understanding; help students to appreciate contributions to our history by members of various ethnic groups and women; and foster the impression of equal worthiness of all groups. In examining interactions among groups, United States history textbooks should describe and examine both historical and contemporary forces and conditions which operate to the disadvantage and advantage of minority groups and women. They should analyze intergroup tension and conflict fairly and objectively, with emphasis on resolving social problems, and lead students to comprehend and fulfill their duties and responsibilities as citizens in a pluralistic democracy. The checklist is intended to apply to both older and newer textbooks and can be used by textbook writers, editors, teachers, parent groups, textbook selection committees, and students. (Author/DE)

Checklist for Selecting and Evaluating

SEP 10 1974

U.S. HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

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Introduction

This pamphlet contains NEA's "Checklist for Selecting and Evaluating U.S. History Textbooks," one part of the Association's multifaceted approach to improve the treatment of minorities in textbooks.

The 1971 Representative Assembly in New Business Item 17, "Referred to the Executive Committee for recommendation, that the NEA institute the development of a complete series of textbooks and other instructional materials planned and written cooperatively with scholars from all minority groups, in which the history of all minorities is integrated accurately." A panel of minority scholars, convened by the Executive Committee in February 1972, interpreted the Representative Assembly's resolution. Its report, which was approved by the Executive Committee, included the following recommendations:

1. NEA should publish or cause to be published a multiethnic, three-volume basal history series, including one text each for middle school, junior high, and senior high school.

2. Priority should be given to the full inclusion, in development and content, of Asian Americans, Blacks, Chicanos, First Americans, Jews, Puerto Ricans, and Women.

3. If the NEA itself does not publish the series, it should make every effort to utilize minority publishing firms for its publication.

4. Consistent with and prior to publishing or causing a history text to be published, the NEA should develop and publish guidelines for the assessment of pedagogically effective multiethnic materials.

5. In order to assure effective use of multiethnic materials, the NEA by its own and its affiliates' efforts should execute a program that will affect adoption procedures.

6. NEA should encourage its affiliates to include provisions for multiethnic instructional materials in negotiated contracts.

7. NEA should seek legislative and judicial remedies that support the instructional materials guidelines to secure rights of children to learn.

The accompanying checklist represents guidelines already in existence to improve the treatment of minorities in textbooks. The basic principles reflect the Detroit guidelines; the supporting principles reflect guidelines used in New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Michigan, West Virginia, and Los Angeles, as well as others developed by the Emma Willard Task Force, the Western Regional NOW, and the Westside Women's Committee. NEA also relied on the works of Sara Goodman Zimet, David Pratt, Garnett McDiarmid, Arthur Nichols, and Anna Ochoa.

The checklist can be used by textbook writers and editors, teachers, parent groups, students, and textbook selection committees. It is intended to apply to newer U. S. history textbooks, but users should be aware that the treatment of minorities and women in the older books is often biased. The checklist was approved by the NEA-American Association of Publishers Joint Committee.

Basic Principles

In examining our civilization and the groups that make it up, U. S. history textbooks should–

1. Portray the cultural pluralism of our nation as a value to esteem and protect.

2. Present the sexual, racial, religious, and ethnic groups in our society in such a way as to build mutual understanding and respect.

3. Help students to appreciate the many important contributions to our civilization made by members of the various groups that compose it.

4. Foster impressions of equal worthiness of all groups.

In examining interactions among groups, U. S. history textbooks should–

5. Describe the historical forces and conditions which have operated to the disadvantage of minority groups and women.

6. Examine the contemporary forces and conditions which operate to the disadvantage or advantage of minority groups and women.

7. Analyze intergroup tension and conflict fairly, objectively, and with emphasis upon resolving social problems.

8. Lead students to comprehend and fulfill their own duties and responsibilities as citizens in a pluralistic democracy.

Cultural Pluralism

1. U. S. history textbooks should portray the cultural pluralism of our nation as a value to esteem and protect.

Does this textbook—

	Yes	No	Not applicable
a. Indicate that minority groups have contributed to the growth and development of the United States, often while trying to retain and maintain their own identity and self-pride?			
b. Present diversity of race, custom, culture, and belief as a positive aspect of our nation's heritage?			
c. Present the environmental and historical influences which have been instrumental in developing various group attitudes and characteristics?			
d. Acknowledge the legitimacy of a variety of acceptable life styles?			
e. Describe the multidirectional nature of U.S. history: south to north, east to west, west to east?			
f. Acknowledge the right of the individual to choose cultural identity with his or her group or assimilation with the dominant culture?			

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Mutual Respect

2. U. S. history textbooks should present the sexual, racial, religious, and ethnic groups in our society in such a way as to build mutual understanding and respect.

   Does this textbook—

   a. Portray people—men and women, adults and children, whatever their ethnic, religious, or social class identity—as displaying a familiar range of human emotions, both negative and positive?

   b. Illustrate minority individuals and women in varieties of roles?

   c. Include in illustrations and photographs groupings and settings to indicate equal status and nonsegregated social relationships of men and women and minority groups?

Yes	No	Not applicable

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Individual Contributions

3. U. S. history textbooks should help students to appreciate the many important contributions to our civilization made by members of the various groups that compose it.

Does this textbook—

a. Emphasize that every group has its list of leaders, thinkers, moralists, writers, artists, scientists, builders, and other individual contributors to society?

b. Describe forces that have prevented individuals of some groups from reaching full potential or from becoming known?

c. Provide adequate recognition of minority groups and women in positions of leadership and centrality?

d. Give comprehensive and accurate representation to minority groups and women—in art and science, history and literature, and in all other fields of life and culture?

Yes	No	Not applicable

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Equal Worthiness

4. U. S. history textbooks should foster impressions of equal worthiness of all groups.

Does this textbook—

a. Include adequate reference to participation by women and minorities in historical events and to the impact of these events upon them?

b. Avoid use of words which may imply negative value judgments about groups of people?

c. Avoid assigning stereotyped roles and occupations to minorities or to men and women?

d. Use words such as "one" or "person" instead of "man" as the subject of generalized statements that apply to women as well?

e. Discuss the poor, immigrants, or foreign people objectively and without condescension?

f. Treat the independent statements or acts of individuals as representative of them, not of the entire group to which they belong?

Yes	No	Not applicable

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Historical Disadvantages

5. In examining the interactions among groups, U. S. history textbooks should describe the historical forces and conditions that have operated to the disadvantage of minority groups and women.

   Does this textbook—

   a. Point out how United States history conflicts with values considered by many to be basic to the American political system?

   b. Portray historical leaders on the basis of historical accuracy or openly admitted value judgments, rather than on the basis of myth or hidden value judgments?

   c. Expose and discredit "myths" which have misrepresented minority groups and women, or have served to explain inaccurately any aspect of social development in the United States?

Yes	No	Not applicable

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Contemporary Conditions

6. U. S. history textbooks should examine the contemporary forces and conditions that operate to the disadvantage or advantage of minority groups and women.

Does this textbook–

a. Identify and oppose manifestations of racism, anti-Semitism, and sexism?

b. Refer to problems and conditions of all levels and classes of society?

c. Describe life in urban environments as well as in rural or suburban environments?

d. Present content which is consistent with the findings of recent and authoritative research concerning minority groups and women in our culture?

e. Utilize the work of minority and women historians, sociologists, and other scholars regarding their own or the dominant group?

f. Provide bibliographies of printed and multimedia materials, including works of minority and women writers and producers?

Yes	No	Not applicable

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Role of Conflict

7. U. S. history textbooks should analyze intergroup tension and conflict fairly, objectively, and with emphasis upon resolving social problems.

Does this textbook–

a. Deal with controversial issues and problems in proper perspective?

b. Give candid treatment without rationalizing, distorting, or ignoring unresolved intercultural problems in the United States, including those which involve prejudice and discrimination?

c. Indicate how struggle for power, controversy and disagreement over public policy, and compromise are at the heart of the democratic decision-making process?

d. Provide opportunities for the student to examine causes and consequences of civil disobedience and of violence on the part of both representatives of authority and those who disagree with them?

e. Provide an objective account of struggles by women and minority groups to obtain equal political, educational, legal, employment, and human rights?

f. Describe the undesirable consequences of withholding rights, freedom, or respect from any individual to those who do the withholding as well as to those who are so denied?

Yes	No	Not applicable

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Individual Responsibility

8. U. S. history textbooks should lead students to comprehend and fulfill their own duties and responsibilities as citizens in a pluralistic democracy.

Does this textbook–

a. Relate knowledge and issues to the immediate life-space of the learner?

b. Present and identify various points of view?

c. Stress the importance of using a variety of sources and experiences for collecting information?

d. Stimulate the student to use the method of inquiry and to develop skills in problem-solving and decision-making?

e. Provide personalized learning experiences which illustrate the relationship between our individual and collective destinies?

f. Emphasize the needs for continuing social reforms?

Yes	No	Not applicable

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Textbooks Analyzed

Textbook A _____ (title)

_____ (author)

_____ (publisher-year)

Textbook B _____

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Textbook C _____

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Textbook D _____

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Textbook E _____

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